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US ARMY

USAG Schinnen Tri-Border News Notes



Biggest Losers win big



Photo by LaDonna Davis

(from Left to Right) Mike Reed, Christie Lehr and Tony Allen proudly display their \$275 winnings from Andrew's Federal Credit Union for being the *Biggest Losers* in the Andre Bruls Fitness Center weight loss challenge. Their three-person team lost a total of 63 pounds over the 12-week competition period.

By LaDonna Davis

Andrew's Federal Credit Union awarded a \$275 check June 28, at USAG Schinnen to the team that lost the most weight during the *Biggest Loser* competition.

Christie Lehr, Tony Allen and Mike Reed lost a combination of 63 pounds over the course of a twelve week period, which began April 10 and ended June 26, in the weight-loss competition sponsored by the credit union.

The competition initially consisted of 12 three person teams, said Andre Bruls Fitness Center director, Joe Lewis. Though the teams could instill their own weight-loss regiment, each team member was required to weigh-in at the fitness center at the beginning and the end of the competition. The team that lost the most combined weight was declared the winner.

"It's a more individual effort, if you put something in to it; you get something out of it," said Lewis. "The team that won did very good; they were very active in the gym. But the biggest part of the program was individual effort; you see what you get out of it."

The team proved through their weight loss that there isn't just one right way to lose weight, but

that different activities work for different people.

"We all had a different regiment on doing things to lose weight," said Reed.

Each member of the team took on different activities- from hitting the basketball courts, to playing racquetball, and even participating in the gym's spinning classes- to increase their heart-rate, and decrease the number calories they retained. But, even with the various exercise routines that each member took on, the one thing that each team member did consistently was watch their diet.

"This competition was my incentive to exercise even harder than what I had already been doing, and to monitor what I was eating," said Lehr. "I really began to read food labels; you learn what you're putting in your body when you do."

"I started going to the gym every day instead of just a few times a week and then I started spinning to change what I was doing because at one point it seemed like I was stagnating, and I did all of that in combination of watching my diet," said Allen.

Though the winning team stayed committed to the weight loss challenge throughout the entire

course of the competition, the members say that getting started was the biggest challenge of all.

"The most challenging aspect of the whole competition was getting started and then just keeping it up," said Lehr. "But, I think as you do it more it just becomes routine. It's just getting started and staying with it those first few weeks."

"I didn't want to do it at all in the beginning," said Reed. "I came from Florida weighing 297 pounds. But, when Tony approached me about joining the team, I said 'I'm in'. If it wasn't for Tony, I wouldn't even been involved."

Because the competition was such a success, Lewis says that it will now become a quarterly event with the next *Biggest Loser* weight loss challenge to begin in September; something that this quarters winning team thinks is great.

"We're already talking about the next competition," said Lehr. "I hope there are more teams next time."

"This is our team for the next time they have it," said Reed. "The great thing about this is that it's an encouragement, everyone can do it, and it's a proven fact."

NEWS

Summer Hire Program faces challenges

Budget issues limit available jobs, 14 and 15-year-olds most affected

By Arthur McQueen

Since before the Silhouettes' sang "Get a Job," popular music has encouraged young people to work. This year, personnel officials are stretching scarce resources to provide summer jobs for eligible dependents.

Throughout the European theater, nearly 2,400 eligible family members have applied for 1,412 summer hire jobs as of June 16, according to Civilian Human Resources Agency, Europe, and U.S. Army, Europe personnel officials.

Budget restrictions and the rebasing environment have created a situation where those younger than 16 are unlikely to find jobs available, said Erin Freitag, director, Civilian Personnel Operations Center, CHRA-E.

The Summer Hire Program runs from June 26 to Aug. 4 and is open to all family members of active military or DoD civilians between the ages of 14 and 22, said Vera Garcia, chief, U.S. Personnel Programs Division, Civilian Personnel Directorate.

The program is designed to offer young people meaningful job experience, prepare for future educational and career goals, and support the Army mission.

"Our kids cannot go out on the economy and work, (so) we want to provide them an opportunity to do that here," said Garcia.

The first experiences at a real job are important, said Gary Goshorn, chief of the Employment and Compensation Branch, USAREUR G-1.

Among them are "learning dependability and responsibility, working for a supervisor, and learning what tasks are expected in an office," Goshorn said.

The extra workforce also helps to get the mission accomplished, he said.

"There are many lower-level tasks that organizations can't accomplish during the year that they are able to do with the supplemental workforce during the summer," Goshorn said.

This year the budget is playing a bigger role than in the past, causing the command to struggle to make positions available, said Freitag.

"We have enough money to fund nearly 1,300 positions, and some other organizations will pay for their own summer hires," Garcia said.

"Part of the money comes from USAREUR, some from IMA-EURO, and some from tenant organizations; there have been a number of different issues related to the budget," said Garcia. "Frankly, we have been trying to find the best way to implement the program with the money we have. Things have been changing from week to week."

Placement opportunities are more limited than in previous program years, Freitag said, adding "Those limitations may lead to a lottery system to select applicants."

"(Army in Europe Regulation 690-308) requires conducting selection lotteries when we cannot place all applicants within each age group," Freitag said. "The two groups are those 16 years and older, and those under 16."

"Applicants that were in-theater signed up and identified the top three locations where they would like to work," Freitag said. "All efforts are made to place applicants at locations in order of their priority if opportunities exist."

The initial cut-off for applications was May 12, said Freitag.

"Latecomers who relocated with their sponsor to Europe after May 12, but prior to the start of the program, can submit a resume if they are eligible," she said. "These will be handled on a case by case basis."

Historically, 20 percent of applicants turn down the offered positions, opening up jobs to more interested applicants, said Garcia.

Additionally, organizations can make special requests, if a specific applicant has worked for that organization in the past. Those requests will be honored when possible, said Freitag, although applicants in the younger group cannot be selected over a qualified older applicant.

For more information, or to check application status, visit the Summer Hire Program website at <http://www.chra.eur.army.mil>

LEGAL

Netherlands Tax Center Recognized for Outstanding Service to the Community

By Cpt. Brad Gwillim

Two Tax E-filers from The Netherlands Law Center were recently given awards for their "outstanding achievement" in preparing and filing tax returns for the Tri-Border area for the 2006 tax season.

Karema Coston and Debbie Whitfield received the awards, which were signed by Colonel Scott W. Arnold, Staff Judge Advocate for the 21st Theatre Support Command, for their expert tax assistance during the 2006 tax season and their professionalism and dedication to duty.

"I really can't express my gratitude enough for the job they did the last six months," said Cpt. Brad Gwillim, the chief of client services for The Netherlands Law Center and the Tax Center Officer in charge. "Any and all apprehensions I may have had in regards to running my first tax center were immediately eliminated after hiring these two exceptional employees. Mrs. Whitfield and Mrs. Coston managed every single tax issue that came their way, often times going above and beyond what a typical E-filer might have done to research and provide the best possible return a taxpayer could expect."

In addition to the aforementioned E-filers and Cpt. Gwillim, the Netherlands' Tax Center was greatly supported by the Tax Center non-commissioned officer in charge, Staff Sgt. Lisa Mitchell and the

Netherlands Law Center's NCOIC, Sgt. 1st class Alfred Cornelius. Together they prepared and filed taxes for close to 300 families in the Tri-Border area.

Assisting and filing for military families, department of defense civilians and other eligible taxpayers, The Netherlands Tax Center managed to obtain over \$580,000 in tax refunds and based on the cost of services provided by private tax specialists, saved the community almost \$55,000 in filing

extensive."

Whitfield and Coston agreed with those sentiments: "One of my favorite duties included packing up the office so to speak, and going to the several off-sites such as Rheindahlen in order to complete pre-deployment planning readiness for troops and their families preparing for their service in Afghanistan," said Coston. "It's really satisfying to know what sort of ease-of-mind you can offer the families of deployed Soldiers by working for them and removing one big item off their to-do list. The fact that most of them received needed money back in their returns is obviously an added bonus!"

Every year, the Netherlands Tax Center gains more experience in preparing, at no charge, the taxes for the community members and Cpt. Gwillim expects next year's numbers to surpass those from 2006.

"With positive word of mouth in regards to our service and the benefits provided for the Tri-Border region, I see no reason why we can't exceed the number of families assisted next year," said Gwillim. "Especially if we are blessed with the tax support team that I was lucky to have this year—they really distinguished themselves and were rightfully recognized."



Pictured from left to right: Cpt. Brad Gwillim, Debbie Whitfield, Sgt. 1st Class Cornelius, Karema Coston, and Staff Sgt. Mitchell make-up the award winning Netherlands Tax Center.

fees.

"Providing this service at absolutely no cost to the taxpayers is very important and helpful to those supporting their country abroad," said Maj. Michael McGovern, the officer-in-charge of the Netherlands Law Center. "They reached out from Rotterdam to Rheindahlen and all areas in-between such as Schinnen, Brunssum and Geilenkirchen, and successfully prepared taxes for people from three countries. Our coverage was quite

LEGAL

Your guide to giving and receiving gifts graciously

By Netherlands Law Center

Everywhere we turn these days, it seems as if someone is either PCSing, ETSing, retiring, graduating, or celebrating some event within our community.

Gifts are a common denominator of all these occasions. Whether you are the receiver of a gift or the giver, the folks at the Netherlands Law Center (NeLC) encourage you to contact us when gift giving is involved. Our office will ensure that your gift giving activity does not violate the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch or the Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Ethics Regulation (JER). We might also be able to suggest some alternative gift disposition approaches acceptable under the JER rules when it would be socially or politically difficult to turn down a proffered gift.

One recurring gift giving transaction concerns gifts to official superiors. In general, DoD employees may not give a gift or make a donation for a gift to a superior official, or solicit a contribution from another government employee for a gift to an official superior, unless an exception to this restriction applies. The

other side of that coin applies to the official superior. A superior may not accept a gift from a DoD employee receiving less pay than himself unless: (1) the two employees are not in a subordinate-official superior relationship; and (2) there is a personal relationship between the two employees that would justify the gift.

Exceptions do exist, though. For example, a gift appropriate to the occasion may be given to an official superior or accepted from a subordinate receiving less pay: (1) in recognition of an **infrequently occurring occasion of personal significance** such as marriage, illness or the birth or adoption of a child; or (2) upon an **occasion that terminates a subordinate-official superior relationship**, such as retirement, resignation, or a PCS transfer.

Regardless of the number of DoD employees contributing to a gift on a **special, infrequent occasion**, a superior may not accept the gift from a donating group if the market value exceeds an aggregate of **\$300**. The JER requires that the value of a gift or gifts be combined when a subordinate is a member of more than one

donating group.

All contributions must be given voluntarily. "Voluntary contribution" means a contribution given freely, without pressure or coercion. A junior employee may request voluntary contributions of nominal amounts from fellow employees for an appropriate gift to an official superior. The JER limits this nominal amount request to \$10. An employee can always choose to contribute more than \$10, but under the JER rules, it would be inappropriate for a subordinate to request more than \$10.

The rules concerning gift giving between federal employees are well established and fairly straightforward. This article presents a very brief overview of those rules. The proper emphasis whenever providing a gift to a DoD employee is to focus on an item that is appropriate to the occasion. The \$300 maximum price ceiling should not be the primary focus. Please know that you may contact the friendly folks at the NeLC at DSN 364-6204 whenever you have a particular question concerning gift giving within your organization or community.

LEISURE

Leisure Activities ~ by Rita Hoefnagels

July 6-9: *Culinary Festival* with participation of many renowned restaurants in the center of Leiden (NL). Open: July 6, 5-11 p.m.; July 7, 4 p.m.-midnight; July 8, 2 p.m.-1 a.m.; and July 9, 1-9:30 p.m.

July 7: *Year Market* in the center of Weert (NL), 1-8 p.m.

July 9: "*Leidse Lakenmarkt*" is an attractive and busy market in the center of Leiden (NL). The large market is divided in an antique market; a flea market, a collectors market and an art market. No entry fees. Open: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

July 14-15: *Fishers' Festival* in the center of Bruinisse (NL), 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

July 14-16: *North Sea Jazz Festival* at Ahoy in Rotterdam. More than 1200 artists participate in the world's largest indoor jazz festival. For more information:

www.northseajazz.nl. Entry: €65 per day.

July 15-16: "*Taste the Country*" Fair at Heino (NL) with local products, home and garden in- and exterior design, recreation and tourism and lots of shows and demon-

strations. Open both days, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Entry: €4.50, children €2.25. Parking is free.

July 15-21: *Nijmegen March Festivities* is a large musical festival in the center of Nijmegen (NL) which is also the start of the famous Nijmegen March.

July 16-Aug. 13: *Summer Event* in the Castle Gardens of Arcen (NL) with daily raptor shows (noon, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.) and lots more. The historic castle and gardens are a beautiful sight. The estate has a rosarium with many different rose gardens; fir woods with native plants; a large lake; creeks and waterfalls. The park also has animals and a large playground. Open: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Entry: €12.50, children €6. The castle and its gardens can be found along the N271 (Venlo-Nijmegen), follow the signs "Kasteeltuinen Arcen."

July 18-23: Join the World's largest walking event, the famous *Nijmegen March*, in and around Nijmegen (NL). For more information visit www.4daagse.nl.

July 19-23: "*Fleurig (Blooming) 2006*"

Fair at park and gardens of Castle de Haar near the town of Haarzuilens (NL). More than 180 participants offer a variety of products and services in the field of gardens, plants, garden products and lifestyle. The Castle itself can be visited as well. Entry: €13.50, children €5. Open: Wednesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

July 30, Aug. 27, Sept. 24 and Oct. 29: *Antique Market* in the center of Valkenburg (NL), located across the VVV (Tourist) Office.

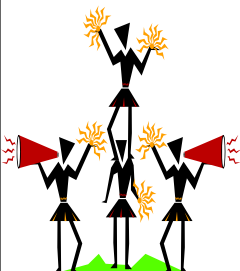
Through Sept. 8: A traditional *Cheese and Old Crafts Market* is held every Friday, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Waagplein in the center of Alkmaar (NL).

Through Sept. 13: Every Wednesday visitors will find from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. an *Antique and Flea Market* at the Market Square in the center of Gouda (NL).

Basketball and Cheerleading Camp

If you are between the ages of six and 18 and always wanted to be a cheerleader or play basketball, the basketball and cheerleading summer camp is for you!

Those wishing to participate in this summer's basketball and cheerleading program need to register at the Treebeek Education Center CYS Registration Office by July 6. The program is open to all US and NATO ID cardholders.



LEISURE



Country Super-Star

CHELY WRIGHT
TUESDAY 25 JULY, 7P.M.
JFC BRUNSSUM THEATER

FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE.
OPEN TO U.S. AND NATO ID CARD HOLDERS.



SCHINNEN NOTES

It's no laughing matter

By Gary L. Kieffer

Entering the gates of any military installation can sometimes be time consuming. However, joking about the presence of a bomb or weapon in your vehicle will not get you a smile from the security personnel working the gate, nor will it make your entrance go any faster.

"Incidents of persons entering our Kasernes and joking about having an explosive device, bomb or weapon in their vehicles happens, occasionally," said Lt. Col. Carol McKinney, U.S. Army Europe, office of the provost marshal.

"We have had several recent incidents. One of them was at the PX complex and another at the local military hospital," said Lt. Col. Deborah Anderson, U.S. Army Garrison Heidelberg provost marshal.

"Some of those who have informed a guard 'jokingly' of having a bomb, explosive device or a weapon have believed it would speed up their inspection, or thought no one would take it seriously,"

McKinney said.

Remarks about bombs or weapons trigger an immediate response from security personnel.

"It's a big deal," Anderson said. "Military police are called, EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) is called, the installation is shut down and the vehicle is thoroughly searched."

"The people responsible are detained and their installation passes are suspended," she said.

McKinney said most suspects in such cases are charged with communicating a threat or bomb threat, under Article 134 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, although some may be charged under German law.

"The German police use similar verbiage, though (the punishment) can be a bit stronger because of the potential endangerment to others," she said.

"Regardless of whether it is an

access control point joke or a threat to a facility, people need to remember that there are consequences for such actions," McKinney said. "German police will assuredly make an arrest and will also make the individual pay for emergency services."

McKinney and Anderson offer the following advice: at an installation gate or access control point, use common-sense. Be courteous; present your identification and vehicle registration when asked, and don't joke about a bomb, explosive device or weapon in your vehicle.

"There's nothing funny at all in making this kind of a joke," said McKinney. "What people fail to consider is that when everyone responds to the threat of a bomb, this actually ties up those emergency responders who should be available to respond to real life and death incidents."

Summer Moves: Shipping a second car

Like their stateside counterparts, many Americans living in The Netherlands are two-car families. Those planning to ship both vehicles during the summer permanent change of station (PCS) season should begin planning now to ensure smooth transport of their cars and motorcycles.

While most Soldiers or DOD civilians with PCS orders can ship one vehicle at government expense from their overseas duty location, shipping a second vehicle is an out of pocket expense. So, the first step is determining shipment cost and whether that expense fits the family budget.

Due to the high volume of summer moves, you should begin researching vehicle shipment costs and options as soon as you receive your PCS orders.

Like buying a car, your first step is finding the best price. That part's free. There are several commercial shipping companies to choose from. Get a free rate quotation from more than one company. The quoted price normally covers inland transport to the port, Netherlands and U.S. port charges, and customs fees. A PCS move can be costly. Knowing the cost of shipping a second POV months before you move will allow you to plan your budget accordingly.

If the shipping price is acceptable, your second step is gathering the proper documents. You'll need a copy of your PCS orders, vehicle registration, military I.D. card or other valid I.D.

The third step involves a trip to the car wash. In order to ship your vehicle, it must meet U.S.D.A. inspection standards. That means the motorcycle or auto must be free of dirt, soil, plant and animal life. This includes the interior, exterior, engine, engine compartment, and radiator. The interior must be vacuumed, including the trunk area. All personal effects must be removed, including air fresheners. Bottom line, if your vehicle does not meet these standards it will not be shipped.

Make sure your vehicle has no more than ¼ tank of fuel at time of shipment.

Now that your vehicle is clean, check its stickers. It must be a U.S. specification vehicle and have both the EPA and Department of Transportation stickers affixed. The EPA sticker should clearly be visible in the engine area. It's usually white with the word "CATALYST" listed on the bottom. The DOT sticker should be clearly visible in the door jam area. It is usually white with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and the month/year of manufac-

ture listed on the bottom. If the vehicle is missing either of these stickers, which sometimes happens during body work, repainting, customization, you'll need to obtain a letter from the manufacturer or EPA or DOT to verify the vehicle was manufactured in the U.S. to comply with applicable U.S. standards. This normally takes a couple of weeks so don't wait! **The number for EPA is (734) 214-4676;**

DOT can be reached at (202) 366-5291/1024.

U.S. and European vehicles often don't meet the same specifications for items like windshields, lights and emissions. If your vehicle is Euro-spec, it must be shipped through a certified independent commercial importer in the U.S. A list is available from the EPA. Having your European vehicle modified to meet EPA and DOT standards can be an expensive process. It is important to note that European specification vehicles cannot be modified to US standards while physically located in a European country. Many European companies claim that they can convert Euro-spec vehicles to U.S. specifications while your vehicle is still in Europe. These claims are false.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Safety: Smoke Detector

DOES YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR WORK? If you have a battery operated smoke detector, you must make sure that the battery is good. Battery operated detectors will warn you if the battery is starting to become weak. It will sound a beep approximately once every minute. You might say it is telling you it's time to replace the battery, do not ignore the message; it could be a lifesaving signal. Smoke detectors with rundown batteries are no longer smoke detectors, but useless objects on a ceiling. Occupants of Government Leased Housing have hard-wired smoke detectors with a battery back-up. These detectors will also sound a beep once a minute if the battery is malfunctioning. By and large the battery in a hard wired detector can not be replaced. Call in a service order to have the detector checked if you live in a Government Leased House. If you live in Private Leased Quarters you can obtain a battery operated smoke detector thru the Furniture Section of Housing.

Replace smoke detector batteries in time and test your smoke detectors regularly. Do not throw the old batteries into the trash, dispose of them thru a hazardous waste program. POC is Mr. Rob Walraven, USAG Fire Chief, (046-443-/360-/) 7230.

USAG Schinnen Front Gate Construction

Many of you may have already noticed the construction work at the USAG Schinnen main gate. A contractor is installing crash rated barriers, traffic arms and other security provisions under the umbrella of an Army-wide general security improvement contract.

This means traffic congestion and inconveniences may arise when entering/leaving USAG Schinnen. Please note that trucks will have to use the exit lane to enter our base, so be observant and use caution. Your cooperation and understanding is requested and appreciated to allow completion of the project, increasing the safety and security of our garrison and guards.

We apologize for any inconvenience and do ask that you plan your visits to USAG Schinnen accordingly.

POC for this message is USAG Schinnen Force Protection (360-7351) and Directorate of Public Works (360-1560).